## Programme Specification

**A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from The University of Sheffield**

**Programme Details**

| 1. Programme title | Global Sustainable Development |
|---|---|
| 2. Programme code | GEOU21 |
| 3. QAA FHEQ level | 6 |
| 4. Faculty | Social Sciences |
| 5. Department | Geography |
| 6. Other departments providing credit bearing modules for the programme | Urban Studies and Planning, Sociological Studies, Landscape Architecture, Politics, Economics |
| 7. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body | Royal Geographical Society (application for accreditation pending) |
| 8. Date of production/revision | December 2022; September 2023 |

| Awards | Type of award | Duration |
|---|---|---|
| 9. Final award | BA (Hons) | 3 years |
| 10. Intermediate awards | | |
| | | |

**Programme Codes**

| 11. JACS code(s)<br>*Select between one and three codes from the* *HESA website.* | L700 | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12. HECoS code(s)<br>S*elect between one and three codes from the* *HECoS vocabulary.* | 100488 | | |

**Programme Delivery**

| 13. Mode of study | Full-time |
|---|---|
| 14. Mode of delivery | Face to face (on campus) |

## 15. Background to the programme and subject area

The BA Global Sustainable Development provides an interdisciplinary focus on global and international development, examining worldwide issues through the lens of social justice and environmental sustainability. The course explores contemporary global issues, linking current affairs, climate change, and activism, and the course will equip you with the skills to pursue a career in sustainable development and to become a global problem solver. Through professional skills training, practical research experience, policy engagement and analysis, you will be prepared for employment in the public, private or third sector. Graduates can anticipate pursuing careers in the UK and overseas to tackle pressing global sustainability and development priorities.

In your first year, you will learn the history and key debates of global development, and how challenges of environment, inequality and sustainability are addressed through local and global policy. In your second year, you will develop your research skills and learn about critical perspectives on global sustainable development. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to tailor your degree to your interests by taking a range of relevant interdisciplinary modules spanning economics, geography, politics and sociology. In your final year, you will learn more about global sustainable development on the ground and in practice. You will develop your professional skills and also undertake independent research for a dissertation on a specialist topic of your choice, and further tailor your degree through a range of relevant optional modules.

## 16. Programme aims

| | BA (Hons) Global Sustainable Development aims to: |
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| **A1** | Develop students' critical appreciation of interdisciplinary perspectives on global sustainable development. |
| **A2** | Foster students' understanding of the interconnections of environment, society, politics and economics in achieving global sustainable development. |
| **A3** | Equip students with the methodological, ethical and analytical tools to identify and research global development challenges and creatively identify contextually appropriate solutions to these. |
| **A4** | Engender a critical awareness of the multiple ethical dimensions involved in global sustainability and development issues. |
| **A5** | Engage students in practice-based learning, including opportunities to conduct research, develop professional skills and interact with leading global sustainable development organisations and agencies. |
| **A6** | Foster students' self-reflexivity regarding their own principles, assumptions, positionalities and aspirations regarding global sustainable development. |
| **A7** | Enhance students' employability by ensuring they develop key competencies including critical and strategic thinking skills, communication skills, leadership and professionalism, intercultural skills and respect for diversity, collaborative and team-oriented practices. |

## 17. Programme learning outcomes

### Knowledge and understanding

On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

| | | Links to Aim(s) |
|---|---|---|
| **K1** | The history and evolution of global sustainable development as an academic field and arena of applied practice and action. | A1, A2 |
| **K2** | Key concepts from a range of social science disciplines which contribute to the study of global sustainable development. | A1, A2 |
| **K3** | The diversity in approaches and theories of global sustainable development as an interdisciplinary field of work. | A1, A2 |
| **K4** | Qualitative, quantitative and creative/participatory research methods and how to deploy these to explore and evaluate global development concerns. | A3, A5 |
| **K5** | Approaches to policy making and policy analysis relevant to the environmental, social and economic challenges facing the world. | A2, A3, A4 |
| **K6** | The ethical complexities inherent to global sustainable development as a concept, practice and field of study. | A3, A4, A7 |
| **K7** | Key competencies and skills required to realise global development outcomes. | A3, A4, A5, A6, A7 |

### Skills and other attributes

On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **S1** | Synthesise and communicate complex ideas, debates and research findings to diverse audiences, including specialists and non-specialists, using a variety of communication styles. | A1, A2, A3, A7 |
| **S2** | Work collaboratively across disciplinary boundaries, bringing together different perspectives to identify mutually agreed solutions to collectively agreed problems. | A1, A2, A3 |
| **S3** | Critically engage with the ethical complexities inherent within the field of global sustainable development. | A3, A4, A6 |
| **S4** | Design, implement, evaluate and report original research applying appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative (including creative/participatory) methods in the field of global sustainable development. | A3, A5 |
| **S5** | Conduct policy analysis to evaluate the impact of legislation and policies at a range of scales relating to global sustainable development and be able to advocate for relevant changes and policy initiatives relating to global sustainable development. | A2, A3, A5 |
| **S6** | Demonstrate skills of globally competent citizens including working respectfully across difference, examining local and global issues, appreciating differing perspectives and how to take responsible actions towards global sustainable development. | A6, A7 |

| **S7** | Evaluate and articulate their personal strengths, competencies, values and career priorities, and demonstrate key transferable skills including leadership, communication, independent and collaborative working skills. | A5, A6, A7 |
|---|---|---|
| **S8** | Work confidently with multiple forms of data to curate, synthesise and analyse evidence to support their argument and justify policy and guide practice. | A3, A5, A7 |

## 18. Learning and teaching methods

The Global Sustainable Development (GSD) course is taught by an interdisciplinary team of academic staff whose home departments include Geography, Politics, Urban Studies & Planning, Sociological Studies, Economics, and Landscape Architecture. The GSD Programme Director (and key professional services support) are based in the Department of Geography (DoG) and are responsible for overseeing and coordinating the delivery of the programme, and are involved in the delivery of core modules at L1, L2 and L3 of the programme. Personal tutoring provision across all levels will be provided through the Department of Geography, while dissertation-related research supervision will involve colleagues from across the contributing Departments.

Teaching takes place in a number of central University teaching spaces – exact spaces dependent upon the timetabling process, but likely to include The Wave, The Diamond, The Arts Tower, Bartolome House, and the Geography and Planning Building. Certain modules will require access to laboratory teaching spaces within the Geography and Planning Building, as well as access to computer labs (which may be based in various buildings across the University estate). Additionally, some modules may involve both residential and/or non-residential field-based research at locations off campus – all such activities will be subject to rigorous health and safety and ethics approvals.

Learning technologies are incorporated into the programme where appropriate – including the use of Blackboard to provide access to programme and module content, handbooks, etc, the use of TurnitIn, Grade Centre and other Blackboard tools for coursework assessments, and the use of lecture capture where relevant. Academic staff may use Jamboard, Trello, Miro and other online tools to support teaching and learning activities as appropriate, including but not limited to providing spaces for students to post questions during and outside of lectures, providing students with online collaborative learning spaces for workshop activities, etc. For some modules, preparatory and flipped learning materials may be made available via, for example, Kaltura or Encore recordings. The GSD Director works with the DoG's TEL officer to ensure that technology is being appropriately incorporated into GSD modules and to support academic staff with adopting best practice in this field.

Students will gain substantive expertise in GSD via a core suite of interdisciplinary modules as well as further (optional) modules from contributing Departments. The core PLA-inspired pathway will provide all students with key knowledge, skills and competencies which will be built and developed across L1, L2 and L3 to realise the Programme-level aims and learning outcomes. This scaffolding will provide the foundational knowledge for students to develop their own specialist route through the programme via optional module provision. Thus, the interdisciplinary structure of the programme will necessitate students to become self-directed learners (especially with the aspiration that students will complete a year in industry or study abroad between L2 and L3). However, the DoG will provide students with personal tutoring and additional support to ensure a coherent learning experience and identity as a cohort. Additionally, core non-residential fieldwork components at L1 and L2 will provide further support and opportunities for cohort building and intensive coaching and support for students.

## 19. Assessment and feedback methods

**Assessment:**

Assessments will take various forms given the interdisciplinary nature of the programme. Assessment types, loads and timings on core GSD modules will be mapped out through the GSD leadership team on an annual basis to ensure students are neither under- nor over-assessed, that students experience a range of assessment types, and that submission deadlines are not bunched at particular points in

the year. Given the inclusion of optional modules from a wide range of contributing Departments, the leadership team will seek to accommodate these deadlines while mapping out submission deadlines for core GSD modules. Assessments from core and optional modules will vary due to contributing departments but will complement one another and ensure that students have the opportunity to meet the programme-level learning outcomes. It is anticipated that across the modules offered, students will complete coursework essays, written exams, media communication pieces, reflective assignments, critical commentaries, research proposal and report, dissertation, policy briefs, and presentations. This diversity of assessment types builds upon feedback from the Department of Geography external examiners' reports (2021) which commended both the embedding of technical skills and range of assessment format as key strengths of existing programmes. This array of assessment types ensures students are able to communicate to different audiences and with different purposes, and will have gained key transferable and employability skills. Details of assessments will reflect core competencies expected of GSD graduates.

Assessment mapping at the start of each academic year will minimise the bunching of assessments - both formative and summative. Where formative assessments are included, these will be scheduled to support the development and refinement of summative assignments (for instance, group presentations of initial fieldclass findings will occur during a fieldclass, with feedback available to support the subsequent submission of an individual research report). Overall, the design of modules is such that where possible feedback on one assignment should be available in good time to support learning and reflection for any subsequent assignment submission.

**Feedback:**

Students will be assigned personal tutors within the DoG across all levels of study in line with DoG's current procedures. At Level 1, these will involve regular group tutorial meetings to introduce staff, support students in their transition into University life, address general questions and provide integrated support with academic skills development (aligned with core L1 academic skills module). Students will also be able to request additional individual meetings as needed. At Level 2 and Level 3, personal tutors will meet with tutees at least once per semester, providing support with key transitions during the degree journey and supporting students as necessary with career development planning.

Students will receive feedback via personal tutors (see above) at all levels, and additionally from dissertation (proposal) supervisors at Levels 2 and 3. This feedback will be offered through individual and group tutorial and supervision meetings, as well as in written form. Students will also undertake self-reflection activities embedded within their programme, and peer-feedback will be utilised in supporting the development of presentation and academic skills. These activities are likely to include in-class polls and short-quizzes using relevant ICT tools to consolidate and check learning to date or as refresher/revision activities. Fieldclass modules will involve informal, in-field presentations with groups receiving peer- and staff-led feedback.

As per University policy and the DoG UG Assessment and Feedback Handbook, students should expect to receive written feedback on submitted assessments within 3 weeks (15 working days). This feedback will be based upon detailed marking criteria and provide guidance on why the submission earned a given mark. For core GSD modules all staff will be expected to utilise existing templates to structure feedback and adhere to DoG best practice guidance on feedback. As appropriate, verbal feedback and other innovative approaches will be integrated.

Module convenors     will be encouraged to provide both whole group/cohort feedback on common themes arising from assessments, as well as individual written or verbal feedback on each assessment. Assessment hand-ins will be subject to an assessment mapping exercise prior to the start of each academic year to ensure the staggering of assessments on GSD-coded modules for each cohort. This approach will minimise the concentration and bunching of assessments, thereby both spreading student (and staff) workloads and providing multiple points of feedback across the academic year.

Students will be provided with guidance and support by their personal tutors on the best use of feedback, and module convenors and teaching staff will be available both within module contact hours and staff consultation hours to provide further guidance and support to students - both prior to

assessment hand-in and to discuss feedback on completed assignments. This support, which is provided as standard in the Geography Department, will be supplemented by ongoing existing information campaigns, infographics and other materials on this issue.

The GSD Director will ensure that the programme has a Student Representative from each level who will sit on the Staff-Student-Committee in DoG. The DoG will be responsible for coordinating feedback and disseminating to participating Departments: DoG Director of Education will support the GSD Director in this process. Additionally, Departmental Representatives from the other contributing departments will meet regularly to pick up student feedback and ensure that this is fed back to the contributing departments.

## 20. Programme structure and student development

The GSD degree is structured across six departments within the Faculty of Social Sciences (Geography, Politics, Urban Studies & Planning, Sociological Studies, Economics, and Landscape Architecture), and offers students a unique interdisciplinary engagement with global sustainable development. The programme is designed to the expectations of the Programme Level Approach, with learning scaffolded across the years and designed to stimulate deep engagement and the application of learning across modules and levels. The programme is designed to ensure a core path throughout the course which will ensure students are given opportunities to develop a nuanced understanding of key debates, ideas and methods, as well as key competencies and professional skills. As a student progresses through the course, they experience increasing levels of optionality and flexibility to tailor their studies into specialist areas of study as best fits their individual interests.

Key highlights of the GSD programme at TUoS that differentiates our offer from competitor institutions include:

1. There is a suite of bespoke, core interdisciplinary GSD modules at L1, L2 and L3 designed to provide students with a genuinely interdisciplinary engagement with key debates and skills. These core modules will develop a cohort of students and create a sense of identity which runs throughout the programme, as they engage with staff and content from 7 different departments. In addition, the GSD programme will involve input from external partners (e.g. civil service departments, civil society organisations) who will advise on and offer value-added to the delivery of applied content.

2. The programme offers a clear applied focus throughout, including a core strand of employability-orientated modules at each level. Designed to capitalise upon creative and innovative teaching methods, and utilising input from external partners, these modules ensure students engage with GSD-in-practice at a range of scales (local, national, global) and realms (grand challenges, policy, practice). This clear focus upon employability is further enhanced by the possibility for students to take a year in industry/study abroad between L2 and L3. No other competitor institutions have such a strong focus on employability.

3. Working closely with key stakeholders, real-world policy analysis and programme evaluation case studies are incorporated into the content of the GSD programme. These engagements will ensure students have the opportunity to develop key analytical skills and are familiar with the types of challenges faced in the sector.

4. The inclusion of a core 20-credit field class and 40-credit dissertation at L3 ensures that students engage with practical experience of designing and conducting a variety of GSD-related research activities, drawing upon interdisciplinary knowledge acquired throughout the programme. These activities will also ensure students are experienced in a range of analytical techniques and are able to communicate their findings and arguments clearly. The modules may include input and support from an external partner (where appropriate).

More details on the structure of the GSD degree are outlined below:

Level 1 (120 core credits)

Students are required to complete 6 core modules, totalling 120 credits, to provide the foundational

interdisciplinary grounding for the GSD programme. These modules cover key ideas and debates in relation to global development, sustainability, inequalities as well as delivering core methodological and academic skills training. Opportunities to relate theories and concepts to real world issues are provided in a number of the modules, including the campus-based sustainability project. By requiring students to undertake all 120 credits of study via core modules we are able to ensure all students share a common foundational grounding for their studies, and gain an understanding and experience in working and thinking in interdisciplinary ways.

Level 2 (80 core credits, 40 optional credits)

Students are required to complete 4 core 20-credit modules to further their training in the concepts, practice and methods of GSD. To ensure the continued support for the development of interdisciplinary understanding, students will have the opportunity to develop critical engagements with key perspectives, theories and approaches to GSD, and detailed understandings of the challenges and practices involved in GSD-related interventions. Further core content ensures students develop a robust understanding and toolkit in the methods and ethics of GSD-related research and practice, and will undertake project work to relate the key concepts and ideas to real-world GSD issues and policy. In addition to the 80 credits of core content, students will complete 40 credits of optional modules. To allow students to gain either generalist or more specialist interests, there will be no requirement for these to come from a specific number of departments depending on what modules are available in a particular year.

Between L2 and L3: Year in Industry / Study Abroad [Optional]

Students will be able to apply to spend a year either working in industry or studying abroad at an accredited institution outside of the UK. The optional year in industry / study abroad will be assessed in line with the University's overarching assessment criteria and treatment of these activities.

Level 3 (80 core credits, 40 optional credits)

Students will complete 3 core modules, totalling 80 credits, as well as 40 credits of optional modules. The core modules will include the 40-credit dissertation module during which students will undertake an individual project using qualitative and/or quantitative methods to engage with a key GSD issue or topic. To further support students in developing skills in analytical thinking, research practice and experience in applying concepts to real work experience, students will undertake a GSD field class (20 credits). Students will also complete a professional practice module to further develop transferable skills and embed employability throughout the degree programme. Optional modules offered at L3 will allow students to further develop areas of special interest – and while we will seek to avoid pre-requisites for option modules as far as possible, some topic areas may require these depending on what modules are available in a particular year.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available online at http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/.

## 21. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to programmes is available from the University's On-Line Prospectus at http://www.shef.ac.uk/courses/.

## 22. Reference points

**The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:**

Subject Benchmark Statements
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2014)
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf

University Vision and Strategic Plan
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/vision

## 23. Additional information

None

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This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.